



Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Report 2024-2025



March 2026

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Foreword

I am pleased to commend this report on the University of Oxford's efforts relating to equality, diversity and inclusion during the 2024-25 academic year. The report is published in partial fulfilment of the University of Oxford's publication requirements under the Equality Act 2010.

This document reports on the first year of delivering the collegiate University's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan: *Everyone Belongs*. Our aspiration is for Oxford to be a collegiate University where everyone belongs and is supported to succeed. We have set a number of priorities under our four main objectives, relating to strengthening a culture of belonging; increasing student and staff diversity; ensuring our teaching, research and engagement practices are inclusive; and supporting and empowering leadership on matters of equality and diversity.

During this period the University has made progress across our key objectives. We have crafted a distinctive institutional approach, which includes:

- introducing a new collegiate University induction programme on EDI for undergraduate and graduate freshers;
- introducing a new regular briefing series for academic and professional leaders;
- equipping student leaders on how to handle conflict and the demands of leadership in a collegiate environment; and
- continuing to bring together students, staff and senior leadership through our regular termly event, the EDI Roundtable.

At a time of growing political polarisation, and amid legal and regulatory developments relating to equality and freedom of speech, we have led and shaped public discussions about equality, diversity and inclusion. We published a second instalment of research on British public attitudes towards equality and diversity. With the establishment of the Sheldonian Series, convened by the Vice-Chancellor to stimulate debate about the major issues of the day, the University has sought to model what freedom of speech and inclusive inquiry should involve – to demonstrate how a commitment to equality can go hand in hand with freedom of speech.

The efforts documented in this report highlight how Oxford is conducting its work in a spirit of curiosity and pluralism. We have been guided foremost by a simple principle: EDI within the University is concerned with supporting our academic mission in teaching, research and the advancement of learning.

I would like to express my thanks to everyone in the collegiate University who has contributed to the success of our EDI agenda in 2024-25. Already this academic year, we have built upon the momentum that has been generated. We have, for example, expanded participation in our collegiate EDI inductions from 17 colleges and 2,100 students in 2024-25 to 24 colleges and 3,000 students in 2025-26. There remains more for us to do, but we are proceeding with energy and commitment.

Professor Tim Soutphommasane
Chief Diversity Officer
March 2026



Executive Summary

Our EDI Strategic Plan 2024-2027 outlines our approach to EDI within the University of Oxford. Our efforts on equality, diversity and inclusion are in the service of Oxford's academic mission to advance learning by teaching and research, and its dissemination by every means. Our vision is for Oxford to be a collegiate university where everyone belongs and is supported to succeed, and we strive to be a leader on equality, diversity and inclusion in society.

The reporting period of 2024-25 represents the first year of delivering this plan. Our efforts have been guided by the four main objectives, relating to 'our culture', 'our diversity', 'our work' and 'our leadership'.

Our Culture: Strengthening a culture of belonging

Our delivery of this objective has included:

- an inclusive student experience for students through a collegiate EDI induction programme for undergraduate and graduate freshers, which involved 2,100 students from 17 colleges;
- a programme of regular EDI briefings for academic and professional leaders from across the collegiate University;
- a programme of engagement for students and staff through termly EDI Roundtable events, which have explored issues including neurodiversity and leadership on equality; and
- the University's Staff Experience Survey (2025), which indicated that 79% of staff now agree that their department is committed to promoting equality and diversity, as well as improved awareness of reporting routes and support in relation to bullying and harassment.

Our Diversity: Increasing staff and student diversity and representation

Our delivery of this objective has included:

- continued increases in the representation of women at senior academic levels, including an increase in the proportion of female Statutory Professors from 22% in 2023 to 25% in 2025;
- increased representation of staff from ethnic minority backgrounds, including an increase in the proportion of BME Associate Professors from 9% in 2023 to 10% in 2025;
- progress in widening undergraduate access, with the proportion of UK-domiciled undergraduate entrants identifying as BME increasing to 30.8% in 2024; and
- an increase in the proportion of UK undergraduate entrants eligible for Free School Meals to 8.1% in 2024, reflecting continued progress in attracting students from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds.

Our Work: Ensure our teaching, research and engagement practices are inclusive

Our delivery of this objective has included:

- initiatives to strengthen the visibility and impact of inclusive research;
- work to support equitable global research partnerships, bringing together academics and researchers to reflect on collaboration and inclusion in international contexts;
- sustained engagement with local communities across Oxfordshire; and
- continued investment in supporting visiting scholars from across the world, and strengthening the diversity of perspectives within the University's research and teaching environment.

Our Leadership: Supporting and modelling academic and professional leadership

Our delivery of this objective has included:

- new research undertaken with UCL Policy Lab and More in Common, providing insight into public attitudes towards equality, diversity and inclusion;
- the launch of the Sheldonian Series, modelling open, inclusive inquiry over a termly series;
- participation from 57% of senior academic and professional leaders with the new EDI leadership briefing programme during its first year, establishing a baseline for future progress; and
- the University's Staff Experience Survey (2025), which has established a baseline for measuring our progress, with 60% of staff agreeing that leaders act as good role models.

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion at Oxford

Introduction

This report has been prepared by the Equality and Diversity Unit (EDU) in partial fulfilment of the University of Oxford's publication requirements under the Equality Act 2010.

Accompanying data is available in an accessible file on the University of Oxford's website.

The Equality Act 2010

Our work on equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) is grounded in the Equality Act 2010, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership. These protections apply to work, service provision, education and associations.

The University and Oxford's colleges are considered, under the Equality Act 2010, as public bodies which are required to observe the Public Sector Equality Duty. In all our activities, the collegiate University must demonstrate due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different groups.

Governance and Leadership of EDI

The Chief Diversity Officer, Professor Tim Soutphommasane, is the senior executive lead for EDI within the University, reporting to the Vice-Chancellor. Working alongside the Registrar and Pro-Vice-Chancellors, Heads of Divisions and the Conference of Colleges, he has been charged with embedding equality across the collegiate University.

There are now three main bodies relating to EDI within the collegiate University: Joint Committee for EDI (JCEDI); Equality and Diversity Panel (EDP) and Equality and Diversity Forum (EDF).

The membership of the Joint Committee is drawn from across the collegiate University and is co-chaired by Tim Soutphommasane and Helen Mountfield KC (Principal, Mansfield College). Reporting to Council and to the Conference of Colleges, JCEDI acts to promote equality, diversity and inclusion. It oversees the implementation of the collegiate University EDI Strategic Plan.

The EDP, which is chaired by the Chief Diversity Officer, and reports to JCEDI, is made up of representatives from across the University departments, divisions and staff networks.

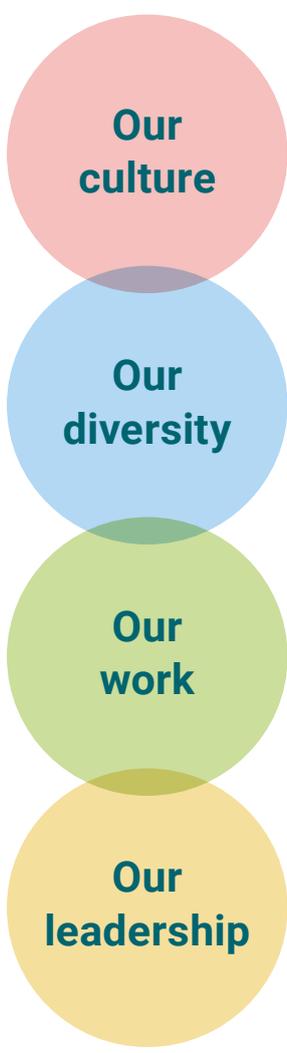
The EDF brings together representatives from Oxford's 39 colleges and four permanent private halls to discuss EDI matters and share good practice between colleges. It is chaired by a Head of House (currently the Provost of Worcester College), and reports to the Conference of Colleges and JCEDI.

EDI Strategic Plan 2024-2027

Our Strategic Objectives

Our EDI Strategic Plan puts forward our approach to EDI within the University of Oxford. Our efforts on equality, diversity and inclusion are in the service of Oxford's academic mission to advance learning by teaching and research, and its dissemination by every means. Our EDI vision is for Oxford to be a collegiate University where everyone belongs and is supported to succeed, and we strive to be a leader on equality, diversity and inclusion in society.

The following four objectives highlight our priorities as we strive to realise our EDI ambitions:



Our culture

We believe an inclusive culture is a condition of excellence. We seek to ensure all members of our community are treated with dignity and respect, feel that they belong, and are supported to achieve their potential.

Our diversity

We believe it is important our community reflects our local populations and British society, and is enriched by international perspectives. We are committed to increasing the diversity of our staff and students by removing barriers to access and progression, ensuring equitable and accessible development opportunities, and celebrating the diversity of staff and students in its various forms.

Our work

Our teaching, research and engagement practices are integral to our culture as a university. We are committed to making them inclusive, with academic and professional staff confident about how to demonstrate inclusion in practice. In addition, digital and physical environments – whether libraries and museums, teaching and research spaces, office spaces, or IT systems – will be inclusive and accessible.

Our leadership

We aspire to be recognised as an institutional leader, partnering with others to shape thinking and practice on EDI. We also aim for our own leaders to model best practice on EDI. We will draw upon the knowledge and expertise of our academics, research staff, professional staff and students to lead public conversations and to strengthen our community's confidence about how to approach EDI.

Our Culture

Strengthen a culture of belonging

We believe an inclusive culture is a condition of excellence. We seek to ensure all members of our community are treated with dignity and respect, feel that they belong, and are supported to achieve their potential.

Our main targets with this objective include:

For those who have experienced bullying and harassment in the last year, more than 60% report it formally or informally by 2027 (47% in 2025)

By 2027, 85% of staff agree that their department is committed to promoting equality and diversity (79% in 2025)

By 2027, 82% of colleges have engaged with first year student EDI inductions (56% in 2025)

Engaging the Collegiate University in EDI

The EDI Roundtable is a termly internal forum that brings together senior leaders, staff and students from across the collegiate University to inform the University's equality, diversity and inclusion work. Over the past year, the Roundtables have featured perspectives ranging from lived experience to expertise in psychology, medicine, Black theology, political philosophy and public opinion. Speakers have included senior University leaders, Heads of House, academic leaders and professionals, as well as undergraduate and graduate students. During the reporting period, more than 300 students, staff and senior leaders engaged with the Roundtable series, supporting interdisciplinary dialogue and shared understanding of the EDI Strategic Plan.

Michaelmas Term 2024: Launching the EDI Strategic Plan



Vice-Chancellor Irene Tracey launches the EDI Strategic Plan in October 2024 (Copyright © Olivia Gaskin)

At the start of Michaelmas Term 2024, the Vice-Chancellor formally launched the University's first Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan 2024-27. The event marked an important milestone in setting a shared, institution-wide framework for EDI activity.

The launch brought together academic divisions, our Gardens, Libraries and Museums, and senior University leadership to reflect on the aspiration of 'everyone belongs'.

Hilary Term 2025: Understanding Neurodiversity

The Hilary Term Roundtable series focused on neurodiversity, bringing together academics, clinicians, researchers and students to share expert insight and lived experience. Discussions explored the nuances of neurodiversity, neuroinclusive research and teaching environments, and the support available to neurodivergent members of the University community.

The session provided an opportunity to reflect on current experiences and to identify areas for further development, reinforcing the University's commitment to fostering a more informed and inclusive environment for neurodivergent staff and students.

Trinity Term 2025: Leading on EDI

The Trinity Term Roundtable brought together academics, student leaders and experts in public opinion to explore attitudes towards equality, diversity and inclusion across the UK, and to consider their implications for higher education.

Discussions emphasised the importance of thoughtful and resilient leadership in advancing the University's EDI ambitions within a changing national context.



EDI Student Engagements at our Gardens, Libraries & Museums

The University’s Gardens, Libraries and Museums (GLAM) provide a distinctive context for engaging students in conversations about equality, diversity and inclusion. Drawing on Oxford’s collections and cultural spaces, these activities use shared encounters with objects, texts and ideas to support inclusive learning, critical reflection and dialogue across difference.

For example, in Trinity Term 2025, Bodleian Libraries curators introduced students to archival and special collections spanning nearly a millennium of history. Students engaged with materials illustrating the diversity of racial, linguistic, religious and sexual identities represented within the collections, including in Arabic, Chaghatay and Ottoman Turkish.

These engagements support students to explore complex social questions through historical perspectives, and to reflect on their relevance to contemporary challenges.

Inclusive Student Experience

College Freshers EDI Inductions

The EDI Inductions programme for freshers was piloted in 2023-24. The programme is run through interactive facilitated sessions across colleges, aimed at cultivating students’ confidence to navigate issues in everyday settings within the collegiate University. In 2024-25 the programme grew to 17 colleges participating, with 35 sessions reaching approximately 2,170 first-year students.

According to evaluations (1,278 respondents), 79% of participants reported a better understanding of EDI, 78% expressed that they were more confident handling conflict, and 91% reported awareness of support available to them.



EDI Induction
(Credit: Haleigh Bellamy)

EDI Community of Practice

The Community of Practice (CoP) provides a professional development forum for staff in EDI-related roles to meet regularly to share experiences, reflect on good practice and take part in professional development. Among the sessions run this year, the Chief Diversity Officer conducted a workshop on navigating the complexities of recent legal and regulatory developments relating to equality and freedom of speech.



Preventing Bullying and Harassment

Since 2023, the Equality and Diversity Unit (EDU) has worked to build a comprehensive harassment prevention programme.

In 2025, the University launched harassment prevention training for all staff to ensure a consistent and effective approach to preventing and responding to bullying and harassment across the collegiate University. The training is supported by tools for departments to assess and respond to harassment. We have updated guidance on harassment by third parties, and raised awareness of the Report + Support platform available to staff. The EDU has also developed manager training to strengthen confidence and capability in preventing and responding to unacceptable behaviour.

Our Harassment Advisor network has continued to grow and now includes over 500 trained members, providing all members of the University community with advice and guidance.

Alongside this, the University has continued to strengthen its approach to preventing harassment affecting students. A single, comprehensive source of information has been developed to improve access to guidance, support, and reporting options for students, complemented by preventative education and clearer signposting to relevant services. These measures are designed to support early intervention, promote awareness, and ensure that students know where to seek help if concerns arise.

Together with local initiatives across faculties, departments, and divisions, this work supports the creation of positive, inclusive learning environments. These measures also support the work being conducted across the collegiate University to strengthen the operation of formal processes and disciplinary responses in relation to harassment and misconduct.

Harassment prevention matters because every member of our community deserves to feel valued and heard. When we foster a culture of respect and inclusion, we remove barriers to people's wellbeing and creativity. Our commitment to challenging bullying and harassment is ultimately a commitment to one another, ensuring that everyone has the space to learn, work, and grow without fear or exclusion.

*Krina Zondervan,
Head of Department, Women's and
Reproductive Health*

Gender Equality

Gender Pay Gap

In 2024-25, the University invested in enhanced analytical tools to better understand pay gaps and the factors contributing to them, enabling for the first time analysis of both unadjusted and adjusted pay gaps. Work continued to deliver the recommendations of the Gender Pay Gap Task and Finish Group, including piloting improved departmental access to local pay gap data. The full Gender Pay Gap Report for 2024-25 will be published by 30 March 2026.

Extended Paid Paternity Leave

In January 2025, the University introduced up to 12 weeks of paid paternity/partner leave, replacing the previous two-week allowance. The University is one of only a small number of organisations in the UK to do this. The change reflected a strong commitment to supporting parents, promoting gender equality, and enabling fairer sharing of early childcare. In 2025 the University was recognised for this sector-leading parenting policy by the Working Dads Employer Award. The Equality and Diversity Unit also launched Shifting the Narrative on Gender and Caregiving: Parenting Out Loud, supporting parents and carers while challenging gendered norms around caregiving. In 2025 the University was recognised for this sector-leading parenting policy by the Working Dads Employer Award.



The University's enhanced paternity leave gave me the chance to slow down and be properly present at key points throughout the first year of my son's life, sharing the quiet, exhausting, magical early days and long nights, supporting my partner, learning his rhythms, and forming a bond with him that felt natural, grounding, and likely to shape our relationship for years to come.

*Pete Stanton,
Talent Acquisition Manager*

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We couldn't believe our luck when the new paternity scheme was announced! After using shared parental leave for our first child, we had planned to rely on Oxford's then-two-week provision for our second, topping it up with holiday so I could stretch out as much time at home. The difference it made to our lives was incredible – it meant I could spend meaningful, uninterrupted time with my family, without worrying about using up holiday or counting down the days until I had to return to work.

*Chris Williams, Senior Gift
Registry Assistant*

International Women's Day 2025

To mark International Women's Day, the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Irene Tracey, convened a discussion on leadership and progress in gender equality. Representatives from four University of Oxford departments, including Economics, Primary Care Health Sciences, Physics and Paediatrics, highlighted significant improvements in the representation of women at professorial level. The discussion also considered the opportunities and risks associated with generative artificial intelligence.

Race Equality

Briefings on Racial and Religious Discrimination

At the start of the academic year, the University delivered a new briefing session for staff in student support roles across Student Welfare and Support Services, Oxford University Security Services, and the Public Affairs Directorate and Equality and Diversity Unit. Featuring briefings from the Community Security Trust, Tell Mama, and students from the Jewish and Islamic Societies, the briefing session included practical scenarios on addressing antisemitism and Islamophobia.

Student Racial and Religious Inclusion Task and Finish Group

In Michaelmas Term 2024, in light of global and national developments and their impact on students, the University established the Student Racial and Religious Inclusion Task and Finish Group. Based on written submissions and a consultation run in partnership with the Student Union, the group considered experiences from students of all backgrounds relating to race, religion and belief, including

antisemitism and Islamophobia, in any aspect of student life and learning at Oxford. The recommendations for preventing and addressing discrimination, bullying and harassment related to race, religion and belief, developing ongoing training and strengthening complaints processes are now being implemented.

We continue to strengthen our engagement with religious diversity, recognising the important intersections between race and religion in shaping the lived experience of staff and students. Activities such as Friday night Shabbat dinners with the Jewish Society, college Iftar dinners during Ramadan, and festivities across Oxford for Diwali have provided opportunities for cultural exchange and for celebrating this diversity.

Black History Month 2024

Our annual commemoration of Black History Month in 2024 involved a special bus tour exploring Oxford's Black history, developed and delivered by award-winning creative, producer and historian Pamela Roberts. Reflecting the theme of 'reclaiming narratives', Pamela guided staff and student participants through the untold stories of Oxford's longstanding Black leaders and communities.

It's really nice to participate in these events that reframe history to explore different stories and backgrounds. They make Oxford a better and more inclusive place.

Merton College BAME Student Representative





Race Equality Week Tea 2025

The annual Race Equality Week Tea was hosted by the Chief Diversity Officer, drawing together Oxford Student Union representatives, Junior and Middle Common Room student leaders, student societies and several University administration teams working to ensure an inclusive student experience.

LGBTQ+ Inclusion

LGBTQ+ Task and Finish Group and Oxford Pride Breakfast

Over the 2024-25 academic year, a Task and Finish Group of staff and students explored how the University could strengthen its efforts on LGBTQ+ inclusion. Recommendations for communications and engagement, leadership development and ongoing collaboration with staff, student and local partners are now being implemented by the EDU.

The EDU and LGBTQ+ Staff Network partnered with Worcester College to organise a special Pride Breakfast to celebrate and support LGBTQ+ members of the University before they went on to take part in the Oxford Pride march through the city.

LGBT+ History Month 2025

Dr Mary Jean Chan, Departmental Lecturer in Poetry and Senior Research Fellow at Harris Manchester College delivered a thought-provoking lecture, 'Losing and Finding Oneself Through Queer Poetry'. They explored the role of queer poetry in their own journey of becoming a poet, editor and lecturer of creative writing. Through a blend of memories, literary and poetic theory and readings from a range of poetry and prose by renowned queer poets within the Anglo-American canon, Dr Chan traced their personal history of reading and writing queerly.

Disability Inclusion

Being and Belonging

This investigative project led by six student interns provided new insight into the learning experiences of disabled students at Oxford. Delivered in 2024 through the Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL) Student Experience Internship scheme, the project gathered views from 220 students through a combination of focus groups, interviews, and surveys. It explored what disabled students value in their learning experience and identified barriers and enablers to disability inclusion across the University. The four recommended priority areas for action were: increasing staff awareness of disability; ensuring more consistent implementation of inclusive approaches; improving communication about available support; and tailoring provision more effectively for postgraduate and international students. Recommendations are now informing implementation of the University's Access and Participation Plan.

We made the great undertaking of amplifying individual student voices into a collective call for change, so it is a great reward, now, to hear that call for change echoed at committee meetings, policy dialogues, even the Vice Chancellor's oration.

*Student Experience Intern,
Centre for Teaching and Learning*



Annual Disability Lecture 2025

The 11th Annual Disability Lecture featured Professor Sam Howison, speaking from his lived experience in Building an Environment for All. The lecture explored how inclusive design can shape the University's physical spaces. The event highlighted the importance of accessible-by-design approaches.



Vice Chancellor's Awards 2025: Commitment to EDI

The Commitment to EDI Award 2025 was given to the Department of Psychiatry Race Equality Working Group, in recognition of its initiatives to support racialised staff and students. This included the establishment of a Race and Psychiatry Journal Club and work to support wider cultural change within the department.

Our Diversity

Increase staff and student diversity and representation

We believe it is important our community reflects our local populations and British society, and is enriched by international perspectives. We are committed to increasing the diversity of our staff and students by removing barriers to access and progression, ensuring equitable and accessible development opportunities, and celebrating the diversity of staff and students in its various forms.

Our main targets with this objective include:

Increase the proportion of entrants from Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) Q1 and Q2 to 23.0% by 2028 (20.2% in 2023)

To achieve a yearly increase in the proportion of female Statutory Professors, with 26% by 2027 (25% in 2025)

To achieve a yearly increase in the proportion of BME Associate Professors, with 11% representation by 2029 (10% in 2025)

Staff Diversity

Oxford is home to a diverse and vibrant staff community, drawn from across the UK and citizenship of over 125 countries around the world. Overall, 53% of the University's staff are female, and around 20% identify as Black and Minority Ethnic (BME). Over 7% of our staff identify as disabled and over 8% as lesbian, gay or bisexual. This diversity is our strength, bringing a wide range of perspectives and experiences into our teaching, research and professional services.



The University's staff diversity targets were set by Council as one of its former equality objectives, and have been incorporated into the EDI Strategic Plan. The University continues to take a structured approach to improving staff diversity through its engagement with sector-recognised frameworks, including Athena Swan and the Race Equality Charter. Divisions, departments and central teams continue to progress evidence-based approaches to inclusive recruitment and promotion practices, leadership engagement, career development and improved use of workforce data.

We have seen an increase in female Statutory Professors from 22% in 2024 to 25% in 2025, and with female Associate Professors from 34% in 2024 to 35% in 2025. The proportion of Statutory Professors from ethnic minority backgrounds has similarly tracked with Council targets, increasing from 8% in 2024 to 11% in 2025. The proportion of Associate Professors from ethnic minority backgrounds has also increased from 9% in 2024 to 10% in 2025. As detailed in the Appendix, data for 2024-25 show continued improvement in representation in several more areas.

Student Diversity

Student diversity enriches the University's academic community by bringing a wide range of perspectives, experiences and talents into teaching, research and collegiate life. In 2024, 3,245 students were admitted to Oxford to begin their undergraduate studies, with approximately four-fifths of places taken by UK-domiciled students, and the remainder by students from around the world. Among UK entrants, the proportion identifying as Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) increased to 30.8%, and 8.1% were eligible for Free School Meals.



UNIQ students
(Credit: Phil Platt)

UNIQ

UNIQ is a free programme for about 1,600 UK state school Year 12 students each year, aimed at those with high academic potential from backgrounds underrepresented at Oxford. Through subject-specific summer residentials and tailored guidance, participants receive expert insight into Oxford admissions and experience college and academic life first-hand, helping them to consider Oxford and make competitive applications.

Undergraduate Access

Over the 2024-25 academic year, the University completed development of its new Access and Participation Plan (APP) for 2025-26 to 2028-29. The APP sets out Oxford's long-term, evidence-based approach to improving access and participation, building on sector research and extensive internal consultation. It reinforces the importance of sustained, joined-up interventions across the student journey, from raising attainment and aspirations before application to supporting transition, embedding inclusive teaching, and addressing awarding gaps.

The new APP introduces ambitious targets aligned with the University's wider EDI Strategy. These commitments are supported by a broad package of interventions spanning outreach, transition, financial support, and academic inclusion, including established programmes such as UNIQ and Target Oxbridge and newer initiatives such as Opportunity Oxford and the Astrophoria Foundation Year. The APP recognises that inequalities experienced prior to entry shape student outcomes throughout their studies and therefore emphasises coordinated action across departments, colleges, and central services to support students not only to access Oxford, but to thrive once they begin their course.

Target Oxbridge

Target Oxbridge is a free and transformative programme that supports Black African and Caribbean students to increase their chances of gaining places at Oxford or Cambridge. Since launching in 2012, the programme has provided personalised guidance, academic development, and mentorship, helping more than 500 students secure Oxbridge offers and opening pathways that have historically been hard to access.

Graduate Access

Oxford's first Graduate Student Access Strategy was approved by Council in Trinity Term 2025, following extensive consultation with academic divisions, departments, colleges, and committees. The Strategy sets out the University's approach to enhancing diversity, fairness, and inclusivity in graduate admissions, with the aim of ensuring that talented postgraduate candidates from all backgrounds are able to access and succeed at Oxford. It establishes a clear vision and priorities, supported by an action plan funded through application fee income and other ringfenced graduate access funding, with the majority of investment directed towards scholarships.

Close the Gap Project Toolkit

The four-year Close the Gap project, which concluded in December 2025, was an equal partnership between the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge. It was one of thirteen projects partially funded by the Office for Students and Research England to improve access to doctoral study for UK Black, Asian, and minority ethnic students.

The principal output of *Close the Gap* is the *Toolkit for Fair Doctoral Admissions for Ethnically and Racially Minoritised Applicants*. The Toolkit provides a structured, collaborative approach to reviewing and reforming doctoral admissions processes, with the aim of promoting fairer and more consistent practices across the sector. Designed for those involved in shaping policy and strategy for postgraduate research admissions and access, it focuses on three stages: understanding where inequalities occur, developing targeted solutions, and sustaining improvement through ongoing evaluation. The Toolkit is supported by nine practical resource packs covering approaches such as improved communication with prospective supervisors, competency-based admissions, effective use of contextual data, and equitable interview practices.

I now understand that an Oxford student isn't defined by a specific demographic or personality, but by a genuine passion for their subject and curiosity about its biggest questions - qualities I'm proud to be developing as I grow into the kind of student who belongs at Oxford.

Target Oxbridge student

We're trying to find the best applicants regardless of background ... That's why funding these posts ... is important as it will help people understand their local data and the kind of thing you can do to broaden access.

David Gavaghan, Chair of the Graduate Access Subcommittee

UNIQplus definitely helped build my confidence and make me realise that Oxford is somewhere I could belong and could succeed.

Asia Hoile, DPhil student and UNIQplus alumna

UNIQplus

UNIQplus supports talented undergraduates from under-represented groups who may face barriers to progressing to postgraduate study for reasons unrelated to academic ability. With funding from Crankstart, a significant expansion of UNIQplus will take place from 2026. This will sustain the seven week, in-person summer research internships for around 130 students, introduce the UNIQplus Postgraduate Applicant Support Scheme, an online programme focused on research skills and postgraduate application support with follow-up mentoring. The programme provides continued, targeted information, advice and guidance for all previous participants.



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Our Work

Ensure our teaching, research and engagement practices are inclusive

Our teaching, research and engagement practices are integral to our culture as a university. We are committed to making them inclusive, with academic and professional staff confident about how to demonstrate inclusion in practice. In addition, digital and physical environments – whether libraries and museums, teaching and research spaces, office spaces, or IT systems – will be inclusive and accessible.

Our main targets with this objective include:



Equity and Inclusivity in Research Funding

Following on from the Equity and Inclusivity in Research Funding report (2023), the University established a cross-institutional Working Group to consider how equity and inclusion could be strengthened within Oxford's internal funding processes. In 2024-25, the Working Group oversaw the development and launch of an EDI Responsiveness Matrix and Toolkit for internal funding schemes. The aim of the Toolkit is to support steady improvements in equity and inclusion for internal funding at Oxford, in line with broader trends across the sector. It provides structured guidance for professional staff in fund administration, committee members and others to review how schemes are designed, communicated and administered, and to identify opportunities to reduce barriers and promote fairer outcomes.

Partnering with the Local Community

GLAM-Iffley Partnership

Since 2016, the University's Gardens, Libraries and Museums (GLAM) have partnered with The Iffley Academy, a community specialist academy in Oxford for young people aged 11 to 18 with complex Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). About 50% of pupils at the Academy are in receipt of Pupil Premium, compared with a national average of 25%. The partnership provides bespoke, high-quality cultural learning and engagement opportunities for pupils in Years 7 to 13, supporting sustained access to the University's collections and cultural resources.

Audience Diversity in GLAM

The Ashmolean Museum’s annual One World Family Festival brings together the many communities and faiths of Oxfordshire through music, prayer, conversation, creativity and activities for all ages. It has been expanding in scope and impact since 2017. In February 2025, the weekend – themed In Unity – exploring the past, our planet and community and supported by co-contributors from across the county – attracted 12,607 visitors, a 34.5% increase from 2024.



Traditional Polish folk dancers at One World 2025
(Copyright © Ashmolean Museum)

Beyond Boundaries

A flagship MPLS initiative, Beyond Boundaries invites state school children in Years 5-8 from across Oxfordshire to create artwork based on the lives and research of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic scientists at the University of Oxford. Since its launch in 2018, 31 brilliant scientists have inspired 750 children from across 48 different schools, with 2025 marking the highest engagement to date.



Winners and researcher role models 2024-2025 Beyond Boundaries
(Credit: Nasir Hamid/simplyoxford.com)

Beyond Boundaries is such a fantastic project. Hugely inspiring to our increasingly diverse school – challenging stereotypes and encouraging creative freedom.

School teacher



The Leys Festival
(Credit: Tristan Copeland)

The Leys Festival

Through the Schwarzman Cultural Programme, the University worked with residents of Blackbird Leys and Greater Leys to revive the annual Leys Festival. Beginning in March 2024, fortnightly meetings were held across local venues to establish a new era of collaboration. The Festival, held in Blackbird Leys Park in July 2025, brought together local artists, community organisations, sports clubs and families for a programme of live music, spoken word, sport, creative activity and community storytelling. The event marked a renewed partnership between the University and the Leys.

EDI as an Academic and Intellectual Pursuit

Intellectual Contributions to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Since 2023, several events organised by the Social Sciences Division have showcased the contributions of researchers in the Division to equality, diversity and inclusion, spanning normative, theoretical and empirical analysis, methodology, and practical application. An event in Michaelmas Term at the Department of Education included research on equitable futures in teacher and school education, and work exploring race, disability and neurodiversity in medical and higher education. A similar event in Hilary Term at the Faculty of Law addressed discrimination and EDI in education, caste discrimination in environmental law, and disability discrimination in employment. The Social Sciences Division also hosted its second annual EDI Lecture to support wider intellectual engagement with contemporary issues. The lecture was delivered by author and journalist Afua Hirsch on 'The Problem with the West and Why EDI Depends on Addressing It'. Social Sciences departments are also working on inclusive teaching and learning environment. Workshops designed to create an environment of intellectual curiosity, critical enquiry, and cooperative learning are enabling students from diverse backgrounds with a range of different opinions and perspectives to engage and debate constructively with each other.

Global Equitable Oxford

The Global Equitable Oxford project considers what EDI means within a global context, bringing together academics and researchers from multiple disciplines committed to equitable partnerships with colleagues around the world. The Hilary 2024 meeting explored rebalancing power dynamics within collaborations, exploring ways to shift the centre of gravity of research, education and engagement towards Oxford's global partners.

My experience as the TORCH Global Visiting Professor has been profoundly enriching and one of the most intellectually stimulating periods of my career.

*Fouzia Farooq
Ahmed*

TORCH Global Visiting Professorship Scheme 2025

This flagship Humanities scheme supports Visiting Professors from institutions based in countries around the world, enabling them to spend a term in Oxford, hosted by All Souls College. The programme has been running since 2015, supporting exchange between academics, as well as providing role models and broadening inclusivity across the wider University.

In 2024, the Global Visiting Professor was Fouzia Farooq Ahmed, Associate Professor in the Department of History at Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad, Pakistan. A highlight of her time in Oxford was presenting her work on 'Locating Silences' which explored how women exercised influence and navigated complex social roles in the Delhi Sultanate, negotiating and subverting the constraints of gender and class.

Connections forged while in Oxford, have enabled Fouzia to return as Atlas Research Fellow at Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies where she is currently based.

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Scholarly Leadership

Mansfield College Inaugural Lecture of the Jonathan Cooper Chair of the History of Sexualities

In May 2025, Mansfield College and the University's Faculty of History hosted the inaugural lecture of the Jonathan Cooper Chair of the History of Sexualities, the first permanently endowed professorship of its kind in the UK. The Jonathan Cooper Chair was established in association with Mansfield College to expand the study, teaching and research of LGBTQ+ history at Oxford, supported by a £4.9 million endowment that honours the legacy of human rights lawyer and advocate Jonathan Cooper. The inaugural lecture, *Entangled Tales: Making Queer History since the 1960s*, was delivered by Professor Matt Cook.

St John's College Hillary Rodham Clinton Professor of Women's History

St John's College has newly established the Hillary Rodham Clinton Professorship of Women's History, strengthening academic leadership in the study of women's history at Oxford. Professor Sarah Knott, a social and cultural historian with a strong interest in feminist collaboration, has been appointed to the Chair within the Faculty of History. Professor Knott will lead the development of research and teaching in women's history across the University. The establishment of the Professorship reflects a sustained commitment to advancing scholarship in areas central to understanding gender equality and representation.

In these times of political change, feminist inquiry is on the front lines of contemporary debate. Women's history is key to our understanding of experiences past and present, defamiliarizing what we think we know, and expanding our sense of the possibilities.

Sarah Knott

Inaugural Lecture of the Jonathan Cooper Chair, delivered by Professor Matt Cook at Mansfield College (Credit: Andrew Bailey)

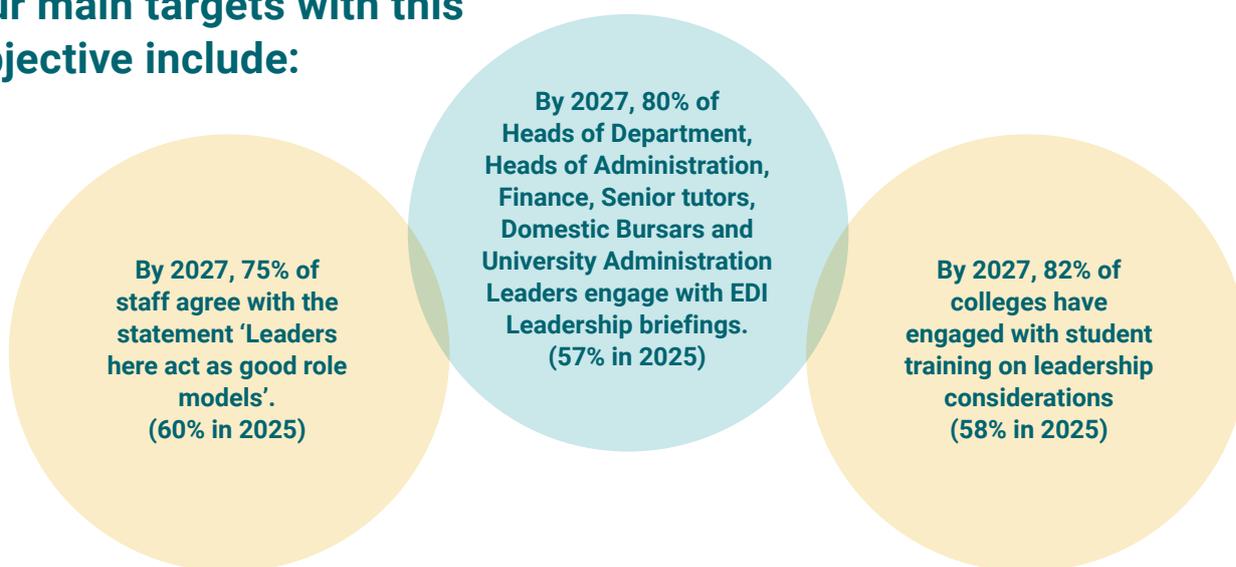


Our Leadership

Our leadership Support and model academic and professional leadership

We aspire to be recognised as an institutional leader, partnering with others to shape thinking and practice on EDI. We also aim for our own leaders to model best practice on EDI. We will draw upon the knowledge and expertise of our academics, research staff, professional staff and students to lead public conversations and to strengthen our community's confidence about how to approach EDI.

Our main targets with this objective include:



Leaders' EDI Briefings

Over the 2024-25 academic year, the Chief Diversity Officer introduced termly briefings dedicated to senior academic and professional staff across departments, colleges and University Administration and Services in order to support their leadership on EDI. Over three terms, more than 57% of University Heads of Department, Heads of Administration and Finance, Senior Tutors, Domestic Bursars and University Administration Leaders engaged with these sessions.

Inclusive Leadership Programme

The Inclusive Leadership Programme (ILP), initiated by the Medical Sciences Division, strengthens leadership capability to foster inclusive, high-performing communities across the Division. The programme focuses on the development of core leadership behaviours including accountability, ownership, allyship, curiosity, humility, and courage. As participants build communication and interpersonal skills in these areas, they are better able to create environments of belonging, to develop inclusive practice, and to step up as leaders to positively influence their workplace culture.

The ILP was launched in 2022 as a pilot with one cohort of 15 academic leaders. Building on the demonstrable impact of its first two years, the programme was expanded in 2024-2025 to include participants from all 16 departments – with 65 leaders participating. It also included a third cohort of professional services leaders, recognising their important role in supporting research culture.

Research on public attitudes on EDI

Through research conducted with UCL Policy Lab and More in Common, the University has continued to contribute to public discussion on British attitudes towards equality and diversity. The 2025 report, *Finding Common Ground*, examined public perceptions of EDI and found that a majority of respondents continue to express support for its underlying principles, alongside opposition to broad reductions in EDI activity of the kind seen in the United States.

The research found that 52% of respondents view EDI positively, compared with 62% in 2024, while perceptions of its effectiveness have remained broadly stable. Nearly half of respondents considered EDI to contribute to fairer outcomes and to represent a good use of resources. The findings also indicate that most respondents do not support reducing EDI efforts, particularly in higher education, where a majority did not believe EDI undermines academic excellence or restricts freedom of speech. The report highlights widening political divides and recommends approaches that emphasise shared values, are sensitive to context, and place greater focus on socioeconomic disadvantage.



Professor Tim Soutphommasane presents the Finding Common Ground findings at a House of Commons seminar, February 2025

Student Leadership Development

Over the 2024-25 academic year, inductions for college junior and middle common room presidents prepared students for their leadership roles. These sessions covered topics including student voice, interpersonal conflict and equality, diversity and inclusion. Over 40% of colleges have had student leaders trained through this new programme to support inclusive student life.



The Sheldonian Series: freedom of speech and pluralism

The Sheldonian Series, launched by Vice-Chancellor Professor Irene Tracey, was created to model open and thoughtful dialogue on major contemporary issues, reaffirming the University's commitment to freedom of speech, diversity of thought and constructive debate. Across three terms, the series brought together leading journalists, academics and public thinkers to examine some of the most pressing questions of our time.

The inaugural Michaelmas 2024 event focused on 'Democracy' and speakers reflected on political polarisation, free speech, social media, and the UK-US political landscape during a pivotal global election year.

In Hilary Term 2025, the theme explored questions of 'Life' from planetary, ethical and technological perspectives, ranging from the search for other worlds to what it means to live well, and how humanity should navigate an AI-driven future.

The final Trinity 2025 event centred on 'Truth', probing the fragility of facts in a shifting information environment, the responsibilities of journalism, and public trust.

Debating the Difficult: freedom of speech and pluralism

Debating the Difficult is a collaborate event series to promote freedom of speech and inclusive inquiry. Delivered in collaboration between Balliol, Brasenose, Mansfield, Regent's Park, Somerville and Worcester colleges, the series brought together students, staff and external speakers to engage with issues of contemporary public and academic significance, including financial reparations for the transatlantic slave trade, assisted dying and the prospect of conflict in Europe.

Collegiate Conversations

Numerous colleges have established regular seminars and discussion forums that foster dialogue and understanding. At Pembroke College, the 3CR talks have brought together members of the Junior, Middle and Senior Common Rooms for short, research-led discussions before dinner in Hall. Recent discussions have addressed themes such as migration and healthcare, and modern slavery in the UK, demonstrating how challenging contemporary issues can be examined through scholarly perspectives within a collegiate setting. At Mansfield College, the Michael Mahony Graduate Seminar provides a forum for Middle Common Room students and Senior Common Room fellows to share and discuss their research across disciplines. Together, these initiatives engage college communities in inclusive and open inquiry.



Panel discussion 'Life'. (Copyright © University of Oxford Images / Cyrus Mower)



Panel discussion 'Truth'. (Copyright © University of Oxford Images / Cyrus Mower)

Appendix: Summary of progress on targets and measures

The Strategic Plan establishes a new framework for delivering our commitments on EDI. Four overarching equality objectives are supported by a series of key targets and measures, listed below.¹ These include and build on the University's previous equality objectives set by Council, and a summary of progress against each objective is provided below.

1. Our Culture

Objective 1	Strengthen a culture of belonging	Target	Baseline	Progress
1.1	By 2027, for those who have experienced bullying and harassment in the last year, more than 60% report it formally or informally.	60%	2023: 35%	2025: 47%
1.2	By 2027, 85% of staff agree that their department is committed to promoting equality and diversity.	85%	2023: 78%	2025: 79%
1.2	By 2027, 82% of colleges have engaged with first year student EDI inductions.	82%	2024: 40%	2025: 56%

2. Our Diversity

Objective 2	Increase staff and student diversity and representation	Target	Baseline	Progress
2.1	Access and Participation Plan: Increase the proportion of entrants from Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) Q1 and Q2 to 23.0% by 2028.	23% by 2028	2023 entry cohort: 20.2%	Update due 2026
2.3	To achieve a yearly increase in the proportion of female Statutory Professors, with 26% by 2027.	26%	2023: 22%	2025: 25%
2.3	To achieve a yearly increase in the proportion of BME Associate Professors, with 11% representation by 2029.	11%	2023: 9%	2025: 10%

¹ Baselines are from 2023, unless otherwise stated.

3. Our Work

Objective 3	Ensure our teaching, research and engagement practices are inclusive	Target	Baseline	Progress
3.1	Increase the proportion of disabled students awarded good degrees ² to 94% by 2028-29.	94%	92.5%	Update due 2026
3.3	By 2026, close the gap between the proportion of female academic and research staff (A+R) with and without caring responsibilities who agree that "I am supported to think about my professional development".	Close the gap	2023 Gap: 10%	2025 Gap: 4%
3.3	By 2028, there is no gap between BME and white academic and research staff in agreeing that they are supported to apply for grant funding as a principal investigator or coinvestigator (54% of BME Academic/ Research staff v 58% of white Academic/Research staff in 2023). ³	No gap	2023 Gap: 4%	2025 Gap: 10%

4. Our Leadership

Objective 4	Support and model academic and professional leadership	Target	Baseline	Progress
4.2	By 2027, 70% of staff agree with the statement "Leaders here act as good role models".	70%	2025: 60%	Baseline established
4.2	By 2027, 80% of Heads of Department, Heads of Administration and Finance, Senior Tutors, Domestic Bursars and University Administration Leaders engage with EDI Leadership briefings.	80%	2025: 57%	Baseline established
4.3	By 2026, 82% of colleges have engaged with student training on EDI leadership considerations.	82%	2025: 40%	Baseline established

² The term 'good degrees' is a sector term referring to degree classifications First-Class Honours (1st) or an Upper Second-Class Honours (2:1) degree

³ Data for 2025 reflects only MSD staff respondents

Notes on Data

Student data

The most recent Student Statistics undergraduate snapshot was taken on 1 December 2025, unless otherwise stated, and includes all matriculated students in the four academic divisions and the Oxford University Department for Continuing Education (except where otherwise stated). Student numbers are expressed as a percentage of headcount. The most recent, complete postgraduate data relates to 2024 year of entry.

Additional data are available at:

- Equality Report (accessible data): <https://edu.admin.ox.ac.uk/equality-report>
- Admissions: <http://www.ox.ac.uk/about/facts-and-figures/admissions-statistics>
- Student statistics: <http://www.ox.ac.uk/about/facts-and-figures/student-numbers>
- Undergraduate: [degree outcomes statement | Governance and Planning](#)
- Student surveys: [Student surveys | University of Oxford](#)
- Destinations of Leavers survey: <http://www.careers.ox.ac.uk/sectors-occupations>
- Race Equality Charter application: <https://edu.admin.ox.ac.uk/race-equality-charter>
- Equality and Diversity Unit: [EDU](#)
- Higher Education Statistics Agency: <http://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/students>
- Advance HE: <http://www.advance-he.ac.uk/guidance/equality-diversity-and-inclusion/using-data-and-evidence/statistics-reports>

Staff data

An annual staff data snapshot was taken on 31 July 2025 and includes all employees wholly or jointly employed by the University, excluding atypical and variable hours staff. The figures for staff in post are expressed as full-time equivalent percentages (FTE). Recruitment data relate to vacancies advertised on the University website between 1 August and 31 July the following year. Academic recruitment data include University-led posts only. Recruitment data only relates to records which are complete.

Additional data are available at:

- Equality Report (accessible data): <edu.admin.ox.ac.uk/equality-report>
- Staffing figures: [Staff numbers | University of Oxford](#) (Single Sign On required)
- Athena Swan application (institutional): <edu.admin.ox.ac.uk/athena-swan>
- Race Equality Charter application (institutional): <edu.admin.ox.ac.uk/race-equality-charter>
- Equality and Diversity Unit: [Home page | Equality and Diversity Unit](#)
- Gender Pay Gap: [Gender pay gap reporting | HR Support](#)
- Higher Education Statistics Agency: <http://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/staff>
- Advance HE: [Equality in higher education: statistical reports | Advance HE](#)
- Staff Experience Survey data People Insight - Employee Listening Hub (Single Sign on required): [Staff Experience Survey 2025 | Equality and Diversity Unit](#)

Attribution and caveat

This publication includes data derived from the:

- HESA Student Record, 2024-25
- Copyright Higher Education Statistics Agency Limited

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N.B. HESA Student Record ethnicity data are only available for UK-domiciled students.



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Glossary

ACORN	ACORN is a postcode-based tool that categorises the UK's population by level of socio-economic advantage. ACORN and POLAR are widely recognised measures used to set admissions targets for universities, including Oxford.
Associate Professor (AP)	The main academic grade at Oxford.
Athena Swan	Charter recognising institutions' efforts to advance gender equality in academia.
BME	Black and Minority Ethnic – we use this as an umbrella term for people of non-white minority ethnicity (who are often under-represented at Oxford) but recognise its multiple inherent limitations and have provided disaggregated data where possible.
CoP	Community of Practice
DAS	Disability Advisory Service for students
EDI	Equality, diversity and inclusion
EDP	Equality and Diversity Panel
EDU	Equality and Diversity Unit
FPE	Full person equivalent (used by HESA)
FTE	Full-time equivalent (used in Oxford's staffing figures)
GLAM	Gardens, Libraries and Museums
HESA	Higher Education Statistics Agency
HUMS	Humanities Division
JCEDI	Joint Committee for Equality, Diversity & Inclusion
LGBTQ+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer and other non-heterosexual orientation
Matriculation	Confers membership of the University on students who are enrolled and following a degree-level course.
MPLS	Mathematical, Physical and Life Sciences Division
MSD	Medical Sciences Division
NSS	National Student Survey
OU DCE	Oxford University Department for Continuing Education
P&M	Professional & Management (job types), Grades 6-10
PeopleXD	The University's human resources system
PGT	Postgraduate taught (Masters students)
PGR	Postgraduate research (Research students)
PNTS	Prefer not to say
POLAR4	Participation of Local Areas – a measure of young participation in higher education
Professor	All staff with the formal title of professor, including statutory and titular
Protected characteristic	Term used in UK equality legislation to denote a group of people sharing a particular characteristic: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation

PSS	Professional and Support Staff
REC	Race Equality Charter recognising the advancement of race equality in higher education
S&T	Support & Technical (job types), Grades 1-5
SDMA	Student Data Management and Analysis
SpLD	Specific Learning Difficulties
SSD	Social Sciences Division
Statutory Professor (SP)	An academic who holds a named or endowed chair, established under the University's statutes and regulations.
STEM(M)	Science, technology, engineering and mathematics (and medicine)
Student Barometer	Annual survey of Oxford students
Trans	Also 'transgender', refers to people who are taking or have taken steps to change their gender identity
Titular professor	An academic or researcher, including associate professor, who has been awarded the title of professor.
UAS	University Administration and Services
UG	Undergraduate
UNIQ	Oxford's residential and online access programme for prospective undergraduate students
UNIQplus	Oxford's residential and online access programme for prospective postgraduate students



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Accessibility: A full set of diversity data is available in Excel format on the EDU website.
If you require a copy of this report in an alternate format, please contact equality@admin.ox.ac.uk.

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